A Survey

by Max Beerbohm

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A SURVEY

Other Books by Max Beerbohm

THE WORKS OF MAX BEERBOHM
MORE
YET AGAIN
AND EVEN NOW

A CHRISTMAS GARLAND

THE HAPPY HYPOCRITE
ZULEIKA DOBSON
SEVEN MEN

CARICATURES OF TWENTY-FIVE GENTLEMEN
THE POET'S CORNER
THE SECOND CHILDHOOD OF JOHN BULL
A BOOK OF CARICATURES
FIFTY CARICATURES

First printed in 1921 by R. Clay & Sons, Ltd., Bungay, Suffolk.

A SURVEY

BY

MAX BEERBOHM

LONDON: WILLIAM HEINEMANN

All but four of the drawings in this book have been chosen from among many that were shown this year at the Leicester Galleries. These four, which are in a collection made by Mr. Philip Guedalla, are here "shown" for the first time.

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EPISTLE DEDICATORY
TO
BRITANNIA

Madam,

I venture to dedicate this volume to you because you have always been very kind to me, and because I cannot think why *you have always been so kind to me.*

You have never, since you came to woman's estate, smiled much on caricaturists, or on satirists, in general. During the eighteenth century you were indulgent enough to them; but then you were still a headstrong girl: there was still a strain of brutality in your nature, to which caricature and satire were agreeable. That strain worked itself out of you long ago. You had become mild and buxom long before I had the honour to behold you. And the recent War has left you as mild as ever; though less buxom.

That is the kind of remark which in my childhood on your shores I was taught, very rightly, not to make about any one. It is the kind of remark which, so soon as I was grown up, I began to make about every one. For, after all, what is a caricaturist but a man who says, "A, you're too fat; B, you're too thin; C, your nose is too large"—and so on? Such a man, alas, am I. And what is a satirist but one who says, "D, you're a fool; E, your character and motives won't bear looking into; I see through you, *F"—and, very jarringly, so forth? Such an one am I. I jar even on myself. I hold no high opinion of the satiric temperament. I despise Thersites and the whole lot of which I happen to be one. I have to go on being rude, because that is (a part of) my nature. But O Britannia, whenever I sail from my home in Italy, across your neatly-ruled waves, and step with a new sheaf of drawings on to those yellow sands where you sit enthroned, I do feel all the more guilty because your eyes*

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are invariably so benign to me from beneath the brim of your lovely golden helmet.

You say that you have always frowned on some *of my drawings? True, Madam; and thank you for reminding me. Over some in every batch you have frowned, murmuring a fine and a favourite phrase of yours: "Not in the very best of taste." And I seem to find in all the drawings at which you have gently drawn the line a common denominator. In my youth, and indeed until quite recent years, the Court was a very dominant factor in your life. A satirist, instinctively, goes for what is very strong: the weaker things he derides with less gusto, or not at all. But you, Madam, have a great respect for strength, and it is the weaker things that are aptest to tickle your sense of humour. I myself have a respect for strength, but also I am inclined, in my fallen nature, to look for the weak points that all strength has, and to point them rudely out. I used to laugh at the Court and at the persons around it; and this distressed you rather. I never laughed with you at Labour. Labour didn't seem to me quite important enough yet. But Labour is very important now, very strong indeed; as you have found. And I gathered, this year, from a certain mild downward curve of your lips when I laid out for you on the yellow sands those of my new drawings which referred to Labour, that you thought me guilty of not the very best of taste in failing to bow my knee to your new Baal.*

Perhaps I ought to exclude these few drawings from a book dedicated to you. Do I compromise you by their inclusion? I hope not. I think *not. You have but to say to Labour, "O honoured and darling and terrifying Sir,* I *know you're perfect. Don't blame* me *for some drawings done by an utterly absurd man who lives ever so far away in a country shaped like a jack-boot." But if such words avail not, and you deem it expedient to reject the dedication, then reject it, dear Britannia: I shall not be thereby the less affectionately your old servant,*

MAX BEERBOHM.

Rapallo.
September, 1921.

THE FUTURE, AS BEHELD BY THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

The Future, as beheld by the Nineteenth Century.

THE FUTURE, AS BEHELD BY THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

Mr. Lytton Strachey, trying * to see her
with Lord Melbourne's eyes.

*——and contriving——
M. B. 1921.

A Translethean Soliloquy.

Damsel of the "Keepsake" Time: "I do wonder what the young gentlemen saw in *me*!"

A Translation
Soliloquy

A Study in Temptation

(Labour Delegates in Russia, 1920)

WOODROW WILSON'S PEACE . . . 1920.

MR LLOYD GEORGE (to M. CLEMENCEAU): "Thought he was going to get the better of you and I!"

MR. GORDON CRAIG ASKING OF THEM "A SACRIFICE WORTHY OF THEIR CALLING AND THEIR IDEALS." [*See p. 47 of Preface to "The Theatre Advancing."*]

LITERATURE, MR. PHILIP GUEDALLA AND THE LAW (and all acknowledgments to Sir Joshua Reynolds).

Unison.

John Bull: "I wonder if you quite realise how utterly sick and tired of you I am."

Sir Edward Carson: "I wonder if you quite realise how utterly sick and tired I am of meself."

ST. JAMES'S STREET A FEW YEARS AGO.

The Marquess of Pantagruel believing (quite rightly) that the sight of him cheers and pleases the populace.

ST. JAMES'S STREET TO-DAY.

The Marquess of Pantagruel believing (rightly or wrongly) that the sight of him embitters the populace.

"*Tout peut se rétablir.*"

Urgent Conclave of Doctrinaire Socialists, to decide on some means of inducing the Lower Orders to regard them once more as Visionaries merely.

Mr. Maurice Hewlett being photographed.

a rare treat being photographed -

"When Labour Rules," or, What M Cambon frightfully foresees, and Why M. Cambon is leaving us.

(*December, 1920.*)

Secretary for Foreign Affairs (holding his first weekly reception): "Glad to see you, Moossoo! You'll find I'm pretty well up in all the main points already. Capital o' France: Paris, pronounced Paree. Republican form o' government, founded 1792. Principal exports: wines, silks and woollen goods. Battle o' Waterloo, 1814. The Great War, 1914 to 1918. Take a chair."

WILLIAM, FIRST BARON LEVERHULME, SETTING OUT ON A LONG, PAINFUL, AND ENTIRELY UNPREMEDITATED JOURNEY ADOWN THE AGES.

Blame the Cloth.

A Captain of Industry declaring that the desire of the manual workers to be paid exorbitant wages for doing the least possible amount of work is a sure sign that they have lost their faith in a future life.

A Belated Reader of Mrs. Asquith's Memoirs.

"H'm!—Appears to have a very facile pen!"

Sir Philip Sassoon in the House of Commons. (*1913.*)

THE TRICK ELECTION OF 1918.

INDEPENDENT LIBERAL: "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and——"

COALITION LIBERAL: "lose his own seat?"

Conservative Interest: "Lose his own seat?"

An Enigma in 1920.

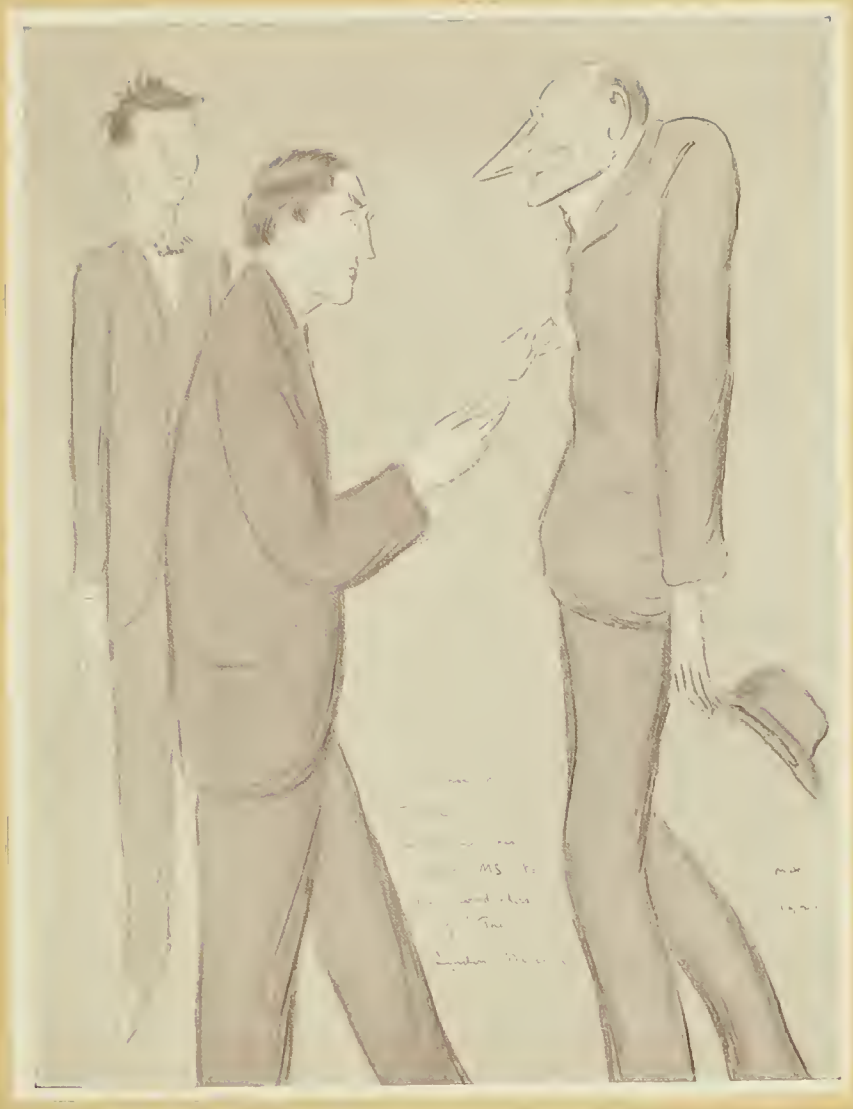
Clio: "But how comes it that at a time of grave stress in the story of a great old nation *you* are one of the leading men?"

Mr. Walter Long: "Well—er—really, you know—feller has a sense o' duty and all that—besides, not without plenty of official experience, quite apart from Quarter Sessions—same time—since you put it that way—come to think of it—'pon my word, should like notice of that question!"

Sir Claude Phillips "going on." (*1914.*)

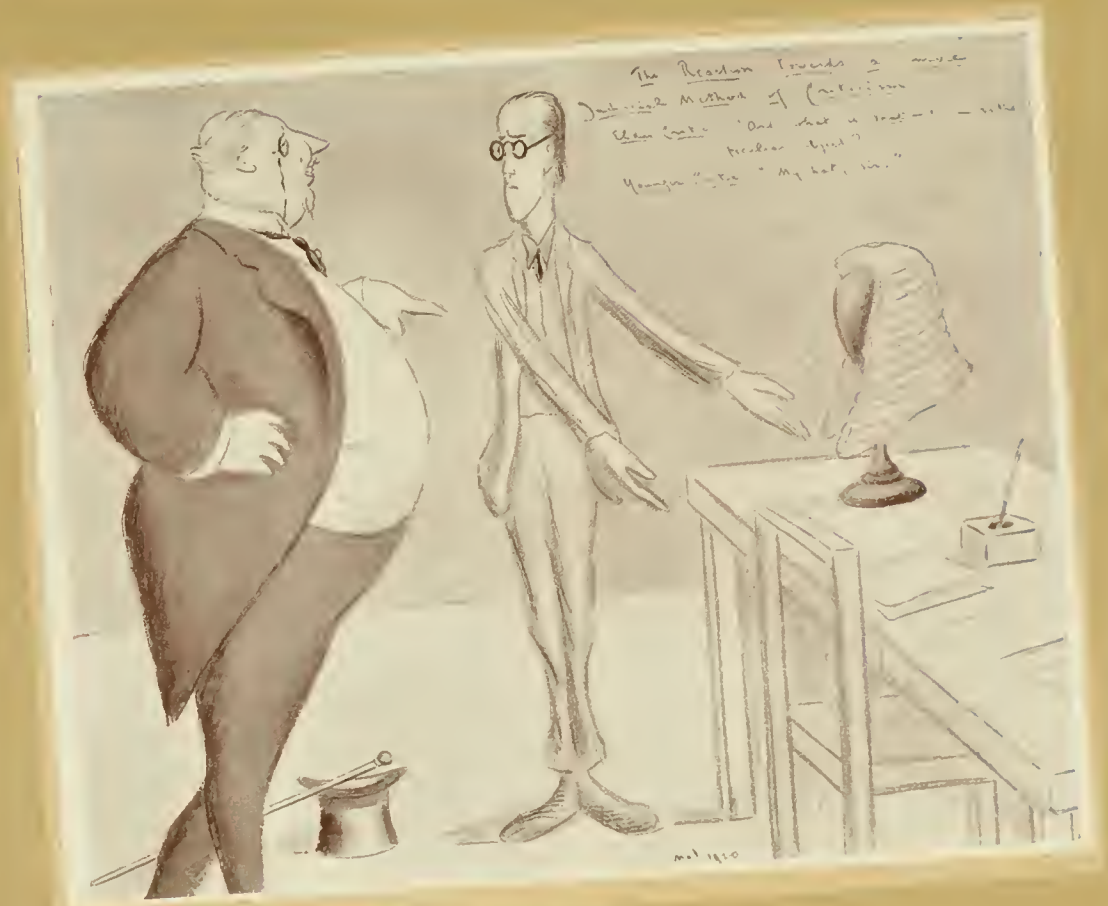
THE AUTHOR OF "TRIVIA" SUBMITTING HIS LATEST MS. TO THE CONDUCTORS OF "THE LONDON MERCURY."

[MR. LOGAN PEARSALL SMITH, MR. J. C. SQUIRE, MR EDWARD SHANKS.]



The Reaction towards a more Judicial Method of Criticism.

Elder Critic: "And what is *that*—er—rather peculiar object?"
Younger Critic: "My hat, sir."



THE OLD ADAM.

Count Wilhelm von Hohenzollern rehearsing, on the fond off-chance that he might yet be extradited, his Demeanour in the Dock.

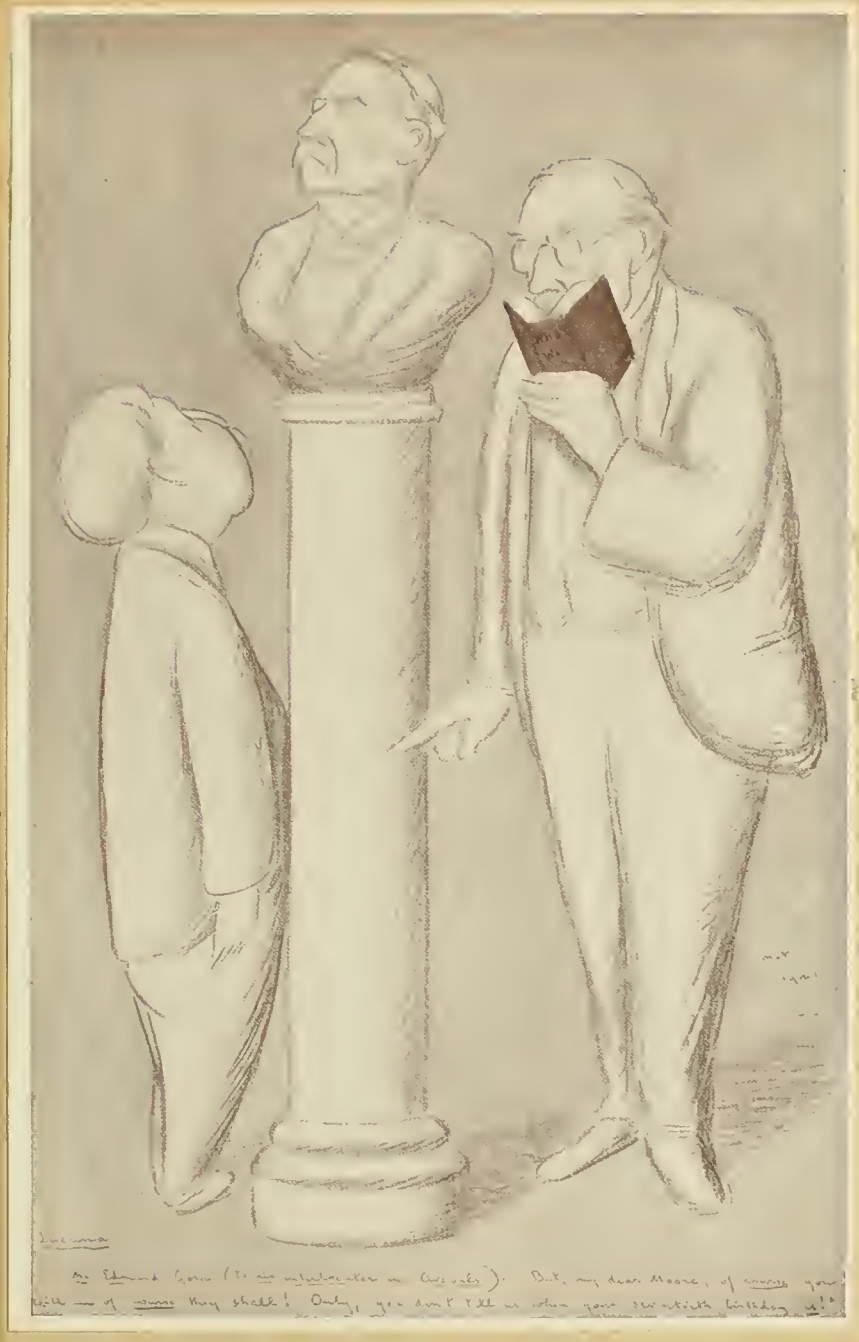
The Old Adam.
Count von Hohenzollern
rehearsing, on the Lord Mayor's Day
he might go to Guildhall, his
Demeanour in the Dock.

Politics.

"M'dyah, doncher think Trotsky must be *rarther* a darling? Doncher think it would be *rarther* divine if we had some one *rarther* like him here? Isn't there something *rarther* touching about him? Of co'rse a Red Terror would be *rarther* awful while it larsted. But orl the same, I do think," etc.

A Lacuna.

Mr. Edmund Gosse (*to his interlocutor in "Avowals"*): "But, my dear Moore, of *course* you will—of *course* they shall. Only, you don't tell us when your seventieth birthday *is*!"


Sir Edward Carson (to his subordinates on Cuxsoe): But, my dear Moore, of course you will — of course they shall! Only, you don't tell us what you are with Ulsterism, it!

"A CHIEL." *1914–1918.*)

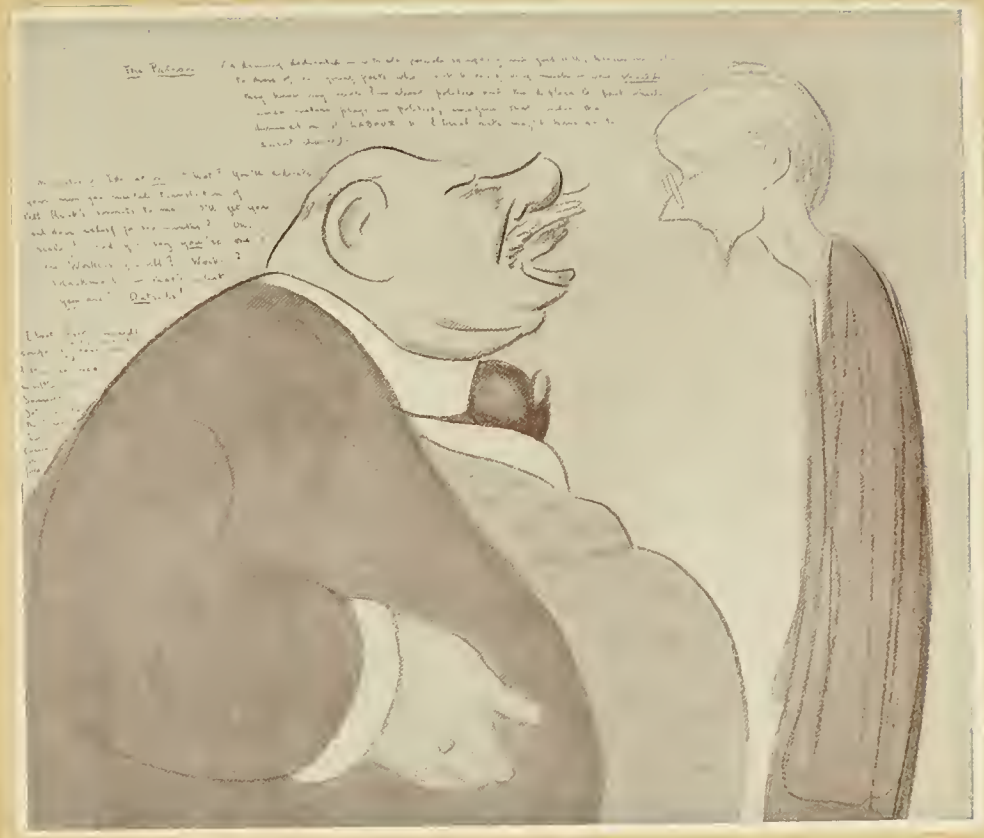
EMINENT LADY: "I wonder what dear sweet Colonel Repington always carries that funny little note-book about with him for!

The Patron.

—*a drawing dedicated* (*with all possible sympathy and good-will, heaven knows!*) *to those of our young poets who, not knowing very much—why* should *they know very much?—about politics and the deplorable part which human nature plays in politics, imagine that under the domination of* Labour *the liberal arts might have quite a decent chance.*

Minister of Education: "Wot! You'll dedicate your mon-you-mental translation of Pett Rark's sonnits to me if I'll get you out-door relief for six months? Oh, really? And you say *you're* one o' the Workers yourself? Worker? Blackmailer—that's what *you* are! . . . *Out*side!"

[Exit Poet, inwardly composing (*mutatis mutandis*) some such letter as was written by Samuel Johnson to the fourth Earl of Chesterfield.]



Post Taedia Longa Laborum.

M. Paderewski: "Ah, read me one of the poems of your youth!"
Signor D'Annunzio: "Ah, play me one of your adorable sonatas!"

Mr. Belloc's Visit to the Vatican.

The Pope: "They tell me, my son, that you are a prophet."

Mr. Belloc: "I am, Your Holiness. And also I have a talent for drawing very pretty diagrams. Here is one of them, shewing that in England the national conversion will take place some time between May and July, 1923.

The Cecils Cross Over.

Mr. Lloyd George:

"Let me have about me men that are fat,
Sleek-headed men and such as sleep o' nights!"

"*Si Vieillesse Pouvait!*"

Scene: A Room in the War Office.
Time: The Present.

EMINENT SCIENTIST (*explaining chemical formula*): "One ounce of this powder, dropped from an aeroplane, would destroy all human and other animal life throughout an area of 500 square miles."

EMINENT SOLDIER (*Sudan Campaign. Medal with clasps. Despatches twice*): "Would it though? Good gracious me, you don't say so! Marvellous! . . . Have the other Powers got anything of the sort, d'ye think?"

EMINENT SCIENTIST: "Nothing *quite* so good at present, I think. But of course——"

EMINENT SOLDIER: "Well, it's perfectly marvellous. But—gad!—how it makes one wish one was a youngster and *sure* of being in the Next Great War!"

"Si vis pacem, para bellum"

Scene — A Room in the War Office. Time — the Present.

Eminent Statesman (rubbing chemical formula into his hands) "I am sure we are all most grateful, Herr Professor, for your explosive, which, destroying all human and other animal life throughout an area of 5000 square miles."

Eminent Soldier (Sotto voce, to Minister of War) "Would it though? Good gracious me, you don't say so!" *Aside.* "Marvellous! Shows the other Powers we've got the best of the lot of it, don't you think?"

Eminent Statesman. "Nothing again to grumble at personally. I wish I had a box of bricks like that when I was a boy."

Eminent Soldier. "Well, it's perfectly marvellous. But — gad! — how one wishes one was a youngster, and could look forward to having a go in the Next Great War!"

INDEPENDENT LIBERALISM'S DESIRE FOR SOME MEANS WHEREBY IT AND LABOUR SHALL NOT CLASH IN ELECTORAL CONTESTS.

LABOUR: "Well, I won't say it mightn't be for what you've called the national good. But you see, Guvnor, the *goods* are what *I'm* out for."

Independent Labourism's desire for some means whereby it and Labour shall not clash in electoral contests.
Labour. "Well, I won't say it mightn't be for what you've called 'em material good. But you see, Guv'nor, the goods are what I'm out for."

THE MERCILESSNESS OF YOUTH.

POST-IMPRESSIONIST: "No man with any *real* talent could have behaved like that."

Mr. Stephen Gwynn. (*1914.*)

THE KING OF SPAIN. (*1914.*)

Psychic Matters.

Sir Oliver Lodge: "Strange, that a man who *looks* so very credulous——"

Sir E. Ray Lankester: "Odd that with such a brow——"

LORD SPENCER. (*1912.*)

Mr. Ralph Nevill pointing out to members of the Young Men's Christian Association the temptations to which they are no longer exposed.

A Gentleman Usher. (Mr. Lionel Cust.) (*1914.*)

a Gentleman Usher
- in Lord Cust -
MX

Life-Force, Woman-Set-Free, Superman, etc. (*1914.*)

Georg Brandes ('Chand d'Idées): "What'll you take for the lot?"

George Bernard Shaw: "Immortality."

Georg Brandes: "Come, I've handled these goods before! Coat, Mr. Schopenhauer's; waistcoat, Mr. Ibsen's; Mr. Nietzsche's trousers——"

George Bernard Shaw: "Ah, but look at the patches!"

Mr. Filson Young. (*1913.*)

THE MEMBER FOR GRAVESEND. (*1914.*)

MR. W. W. JACOBS: "It's no sort of use talking to *them* about the Unity and Integrity of the Empire. All they want is that you should sit down on your hat and stand rum all round."

THE OLD PILGRIM COMES HOME.

A drawing of Henry James, done in 1913.

MANNERS. (*1913.*)

MR. BONAR LAW (*indicating Mr. Robey*): "Now *he* really *is* vulgar."

MR. ASQUITH: "I conceive, Sir, that he could plead justificatory tradition."

Mr. Sidney Webb on his birthday.

President Wilson addressing Congress. (*1913.*)

"A PARTY IN A PARLOUR, ALL SILENT AND ALL DAMNED"—
AND, AS USUAL, MR. JOSEPH CONRAD INTRUDING.

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